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ON PAGE 3

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Washington Weekly Hand-Carried To Moscow

by Cliff Kincaid

A recent issue of the *Washington Weekly* that featured a denunciation of the KGB (Olympic) Games and stories about Soviet atrocities in Afghanistan will soon be delivered to Vitaliy Smirnov, the deputy head of the Soviet Union's Olympic Committee. It is being hand-carried by Ms. Zoya Zarbina, the chief interpreter of the Olympic Press Center for the Moscow Games, who recently visited the U.S. Ms. Zarabina jokingly referred to the *Weekly* as a "gem."

Ms. Zarubina and two comrades were in Washington on June 24—one day after President Carter issued a scathing denunciation of Soviet compliance with the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Agreement. For Ms. Zarabina, of course, everything was lovely back home.

Alexander Kislov, a member of the Soviet Peace Committee, and Anatoly Sokholov, a pastor in the Soviet Baptist Union, appeared with Ms. Zarubina at a news conference held in the United Methodist Building in Northeast Washington. They had just returned from a tour that took them to cities across the U.S. where they met with church leaders, city and state officials, and members of the press. The trip was sponsored by the Committee for U.S.-Soviet Citizens' Dialogue.

Before the news conference, the Soviets were given copies of the June 24 issue of the *Washington Weekly*. The headline, "Soviet Olympics Flop—and TASS Hyprocrisy," immediately caught their eye. Ms. Zarubina scanned the article and mumbled, "hmmmm KGB Games."

The Soviets said the American people were very friendly and expressed interest in a number of topics, including Afghanistan, life in the U.S.S.R., Andrei Sakharov, the Olympics, and Alexander Solzhenitsyn. But they blasted the U.S. mass media, labeling it one-sided, sensational and often inaccurate. Kislov complained that the U.S. was not getting the Soviet-line on the situation in Afghanistan. Rev. Sokholov ridiculed an article in the American press that he said had reported that sermons in the Soviet Union were screened by the KGB. This is ridiculous, he said.

Ms. Zarubina said that a recent *Newsweek* article has said that the Soviet people were not being told why the U.S. was leading a campaign for an Olympic boycott. This is inaccurate, she said. All of the Soviet papers are reporting this campaign, she claimed. Ms. Zarubina said the Soviets are a great sports nation and are proud to be hosting the games. The boycott is a "sad occurence," she added. Referring to the *Washington Weekly* article on the KGB games and TASS hypocrisy, she said: "We love to throw around terms that are baddy, baddy, aren't we? (sic)"

The Soviet pastor was asked about the case of the dissident priest and activist, Dmitri Dudko, who had been arrested on charges of anti-Soviet agitation. The priest, arrested six months ago, appeared on Soviet television on June 20 apologizing for his activities. A UPI dispatch described him as "nervous and tired" while the *New York Times* said, "The circumstances of the confession—its suddenness and its immediate broadcast over nationwide telesion—were unusual." The priest had obviously been interrogated and harassed by the KGB. Rev. Sokholov, without referring specifically to the Dudko incident, said that some pastors were acting more like politicians than religious figures and were working outside the law.

The Soviets were asked if visitors to their country would be given the same freedom to travel as they enjoyed in this country. Specifically, would an American visitor be allowed to meet with the famous Soviet scientist (now exiled to the city of Gorky) Andrei Sakharov. "We're out of the country now," responded Ms. Zarubina. "With the latest development and the letter that he has written (printed in the *New York Times* magazine and the *Washington Star)*, I don't really know. I would like to check in my own country what are the events that brought about this letter. But I would say if you go through proper channels, you could."

They were also asked about Solzhenitsyn's place in Soviet history. Are his books and articles available in the Soviet Union? Sokholov replied that you could find many of his articles and books in the libraries. But "Not Gulag," added Ms. Zarubina.

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